

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (previously presented) A piston assembly having a pre-established configuration, said piston assembly comprising:
 - a piston member having a plurality of ring grooves therein;
 - a plurality of rings being positioned within said plurality of ring grooves, said plurality of rings having an expanded position and a compressed position, said piston member and said plurality of rings being coated by one of a lubricant and a rust inhibitor;
 - a sleeve being positioned about said piston member and said plurality of rings, said sleeve maintaining said plurality of rings in said compressed position; and
 - a container being positioned about said piston member.
2. (original) The piston assembly of claim 1, wherein the container is a bag.
3. (original) The piston assembly of claim 2, wherein said container is sealed.
4. (original) The piston assembly of claim 1, wherein a second container is adapted to hold a plurality of piston assemblies in a pre-packaged configuration.
5. (original) The piston assembly of claim 1 wherein said sleeve has a variable inside diameter.
6. (previously presented) A piston assembly having a pre-established configuration, said piston assembly comprising:
 - a piston member having a plurality of ring grooves therein;
 - a plurality of rings being positioned within said plurality of ring grooves, said piston member and said plurality of rings being coated by one of a lubricant and a rust inhibitor;
 - a sleeve being positioned about said piston member and said plurality of rings;and

a container being positioned about said piston member.

7. (original) The piston assembly of claim 1, wherein the container is a bag.

8. (original) The piston assembly of claim 2, wherein said container is sealed.

9. (original) The piston assembly of claim 1, wherein a second container is adapted to hold a plurality of piston assemblies in a pre-packaged configuration.

10. (original) The piston assembly of claim 1 wherein said sleeve has a variable inside diameter.

11. (previously withdrawn) A method of assembling a prepackaged piston assembly having a pre-established configuration into an engine, said prepackaged piston assembly comprising a piston assembly, said piston assembly having a piston member and a plurality of rings thereon, and a sleeve positioned thereabout maintaining said plurality of rings in a compressed position, said engine having a block and a cylinder bore therein; said method of assembly comprising the steps of:

- removing said piston assembly from a container;
- positioning said piston assembly in alignment with said cylinder bore;
- positioning said sleeve in contact with said block;
- maintaining said sleeve in contact with said block;
- removing said piston assembly from said sleeve;
- inserting said piston assembly into said cylinder bore; and
- disposing of said sleeve.

12. (previously withdrawn) The method of assembly in claim 11, wherein said step of removing said piston assembly from said sleeve includes said piston member being pushed from said sleeve into said cylinder bore simultaneously.

13. (previously withdrawn) The method of assembly in claim 11, wherein said step of removing said the piston assembly from said sleeve includes pulling said piston member into said cylinder bore simultaneously.

14. (previously withdrawn) The method of assembly in claim 11, wherein said step of inserting said piston member the plurality of rings are released from said compressed position within said cylinder bore.

15. (previously withdrawn) The method of assembly of claim 7, wherein said step of removing said piston assembly from said container includes breaking a seal.

16. (previously withdrawn) The method of assembly in claim 7, wherein a further step includes visually confirming the position of the plurality of rings.

17. (previously withdrawn) A sleeve adapted for use with a piston assembly having a piston member, the piston member having a predetermined ring spread said sleeve maintaining a plurality of rings in a compressed position, said sleeve comprising:

- a top surface;
- a bottom surface;
- an outer wall;
- a sleeve bore being substantially perpendicular to the bottom surface; and
- a window extending from said outer wall to said sleeve bore.

18. (previously withdrawn) The sleeve of claim 17, being manufactured of a substantially transparent material.

19. (previously withdrawn) The sleeve of claim 17, wherein said sleeve bore includes a variable inside diameter.

20. (previously withdrawn) A method of manufacturing a sleeve for use with a piston assembly having a pre-packaged configuration, said method including the steps of:

- providing a first length of tube having a pre-determined inside diameter, an outer wall, a first end and a second end;

- removing a second length of tube from said first length of tube, said second length of tube having a length being greater than a ring spread of said piston assembly; and
- providing a window, extending from said outer wall to said sleeve bore.

21. (previously withdrawn) The method of manufacturing a sleeve of claim 20, wherein said first length of tube is a liner for a combustion cylinder of an engine.

22. (previously presented) The piston assembly of Claim 6 wherein said plurality of rings have an expanded position and a compressed position, and further wherein said sleeve being positioned about said piston member and said plurality of rings, said sleeve maintaining said plurality of rings in said compressed position.

23. (canceled) A piston assembly having a pre-established configuration, said piston assembly comprising:

a piston member having a plurality of ring grooves therein;

a plurality of rings being positioned within said plurality of ring grooves, said plurality of rings having an expanded position and a compressed position;

a sleeve being positioned about said piston member and said plurality of rings, said sleeve maintaining said plurality of rings in said compressed position; and

a container being positioned about said piston member.

24. (canceled) The piston assembly of claim 23, wherein the container is a bag.

25. (canceled) The piston assembly of claim 24, wherein said container is sealed.

26. (canceled) The piston assembly of claim 23, wherein a second container is adapted to hold a plurality of piston assemblies in a pre-packaged configuration.

27. (canceled) The piston assembly of claim 23 wherein said sleeve has a variable inside diameter.

28. (canceled) The piston assembly of claim 23 wherein said piston member and said plurality of rings are coated by one of a lubricant and a rust inhibitor.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Examiner has rejected Claim 23 as being anticipated by Vachon (4,480,368). Claim 23 has been canceled, therefore the rejection is moot.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Examiner has rejected Claims 23 - 25 under the obviousness provisions of 35 U.S.C. § 103 as allegedly being unpatentable over Vachon (4,480,368), in view of Official Notice and MacDonnell (3,946,873). Claims 23 - 25 have been canceled and therefore the rejection is moot.

The Examiner has rejected Claims 26 - 27 under the obviousness provisions of 35 U.S.C. § 103 as allegedly being unpatentable over Vachon (4,480,368), in view of Official Notice and MacDonnell (3,946,873) and further in view of Woodring et al. (5,992,634). Claims 26 and 27 have been canceled and therefore the rejection is moot.

Rejections under Double Patenting

Claims 23 - 25 and 27 have been rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1 - 7 of U.S. Patent No. 6,318,551. Claims 23 - 25 and 27 have been canceled and therefore the rejection is moot.